

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSC-01
JUSE-00 FBIE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
/049 W

-----093065 302140Z /64

O 302133Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6139
INFO AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMCONSUL QUEBEC
ALL OTHER CANADIAN POSTS POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 00461

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, CA
SUBJECT: SOLICITOR GENERAL FRANCIS FOX ANNOUNCES
RESIGNATION, JANUARY 30.

1. AT END OF HOUSE OF COMMONS QUESTION PERIOD JANUARY 30,
SOLICITOR GENERAL FRANCIS FOX ANNOUNCED THAT HE HAD
RESIGNED FROM CABINET JANUARY 27. IN A BRIEF STATEMENT,
HE INDICATED THAT, SEVERAL YEARS AGO HE HAD HAD A "BRIEF
LIAISON" WITH A MARRIED WOMAN WHO HAD BECOME PREGNANT.
THE WOMAN HAD SOUGHT, HE SAID, A THERAPUTIC ABORTION AND
HE HAD SIGNED THE HUSBAND'S NAME FOR AGREEMENT TO ABORTION.
FYI: WHILE THIS IS NOT YET CLEAR, EMBASSY ASSUMES FALSE
SIGNATURE MAY HAVE BEEN A CRIME. END FYI.

2. FOX ENDED HIS STATEMENT BY INDICATING THAT INFORMATION
ABOUT EVENT HAD BECOME KNOWN AND THAT HE HAD RECENTLY
ADMITTED THE FACTS TO AUTHORITIES IN THE PROVINCE WHERE
THE ABORTION TOOK PLACE. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE
MATTER WOULD END WITH HIS RESIGNATION AND THAT PARTIES
INVOLVED WOULD NOT BE FURTHER DAMAGED BY PUBLIC REVELA-
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TIONS.

3. COMMENT: FOX HAS BEEN UNDER CONSIDERABLE OPPOSITION
AND MEDIA HEAT IN CONNECTION WITH INVESTIGATIONS INTO RCMP
ILLEGAL ACTS. ON JANUARY 30, FOR EXAMPLE, TORONTO GLOBE
AND MAIL CARRIED A FRONT-PAGE STORY ALLEGING THAT FOX HAD
MISLEAD THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AS TO THE DATE ON WHICH HE

FIRST LEARNED OF RCMP BREAK-IN TO OBTAIN PARTI QUEBECOIS MEMBERSHIP LISTS. ACTUAL REASON FOR FOX RESIGNATION, HOWEVER, CAME AS COMPLETE SURPRISE TO OBSERVERS.

4. EMBASSY ASSUMES THAT THERE WILL BE POLITICAL DAMAGE TO TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT SINCE THIS IS ANOTHER IN LONG SERIES OF MINI-SCANDALS INVOLVING TRUDEAU CABINET MINISTERS. IT WILL PRESUMABLY RECEIVE EXTENSIVE MEDIA PLAY IN VIEW OF ITS SENSATIONAL NATURE.

5. CRITICISM MAY BE SOMEWHAT MUTED, HOWEVER, IN LIGHT OF PERSONAL TRAGEDY INVOLVED IN ABRUPT END OF PROMISING FOX CAREER. QUITE APART FROM PUBLIC REACTION TO RESIGNATION, DEPARTURE OF FOX, WHO WAS AMONG MOST CAPABLE AND ATTRACTIVE YOUNG MINISTERS, IS SEVERE LOSS TO TRUDEAU CABINET WHICH PRESENTS GENERALLY LACKLUSTER IMAGE. ENDERS

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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